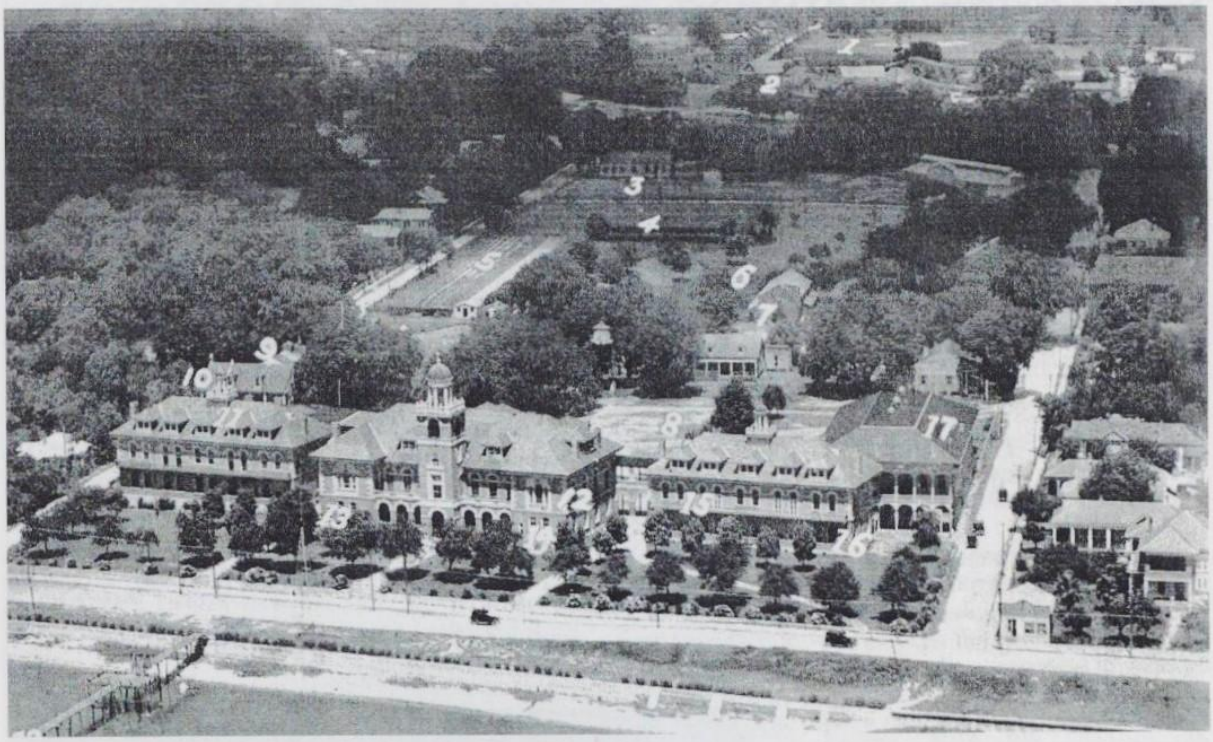
Retro #16: AERIAL VIEWS OF THE SSC MAIN CAMPUS 1926-2002

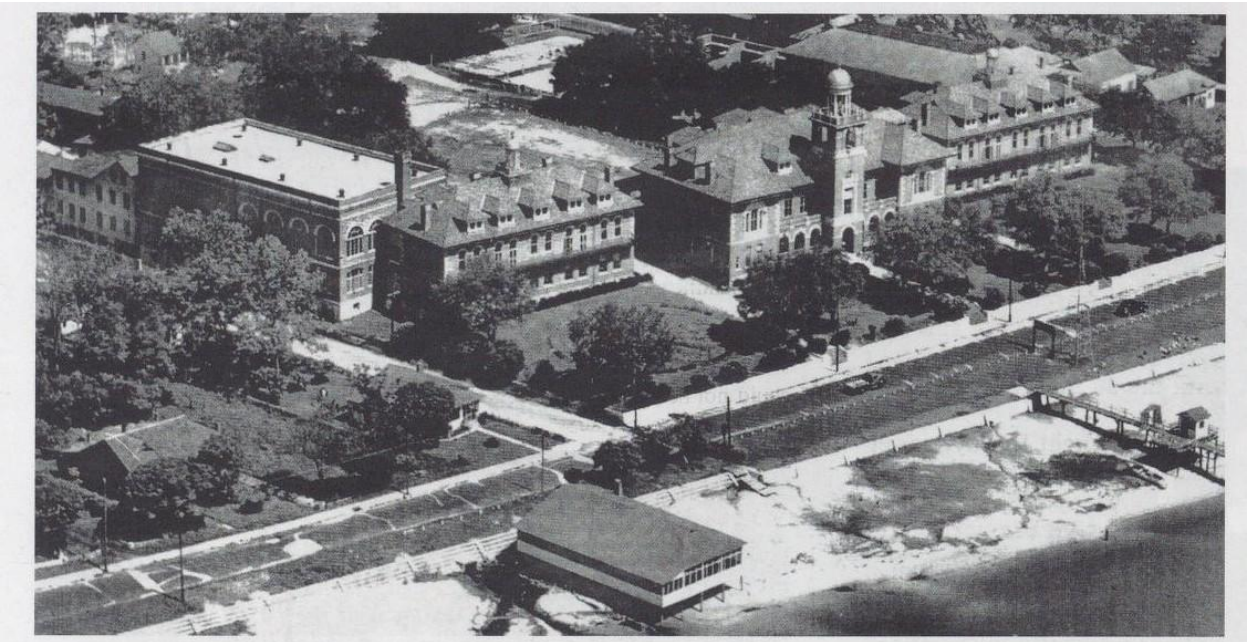
Saint Stanislaus College has always been renowned for the natural beauty of its campus, graced with majestic oak trees and a magnificent view of St. Louis Bay. Aerial views of the SSC campus from 1926 to 2002 show dramatic changes as different building were constructed or demolished to meet changing needs. Some of the changes were necessitated by wind and water as hurricanes ravaged the campus, damaging and destroying its buildings and landscaped grounds. There was also the famous fire of 1903 that burned the main school building to the ground. These damages, serious as they were, also assured that Saint Stanislaus in rebuilding had up-to-date facilities.

Aerial view of the St. Stanislaus College campus complex taken in 1926 shows the "new" gym and auditorium, #17.



1. Rock-A-Chaw Park--Campus
2. L&N Train Station
3. St. Stanislaus Free Day School
4. Brothers' Cemetery
5. Vegetable Garden
6. Pecan Orchard
7. Dairy
8. Playground
9. Kitchen, Dining Room
10. Music Hall
11. Brothers' Quarters
12. Senior Dormitory
13. Senior Study Hall
14. Junior Study Hall
15. Junior Dormitory
16. Classrooms

1. The aerial view of 1926 is fascinating with its many building and various uses of the school campus. It shows the location of the Brothers' Cemetery before it was moved to the other side of Hancock Street in 1955. It also shows the gym (#17) built in 1923 and called the "old gym" for many years after the Br. Peter gym was constructed in 1977.



Aerial shot of the front of SSC and its shoreline before the 1947 Hurricane shows the sandy beach that Hancock County constructed in May of 1942. In 1943 the College bought the large bath house on the beach in the foreground. Called the Sea Gull, it served several years as a dorm for 50 summer campers until it was taken down by the College in 1946.

2. The 1944 aerial view above shows the Chapel building constructed in 1929. Just behind it on Bookter Street can be seen the building which housed the Music Hall for 99 years from 1859 to 1958. In front of the school wing nearest Bookter Street was a beautiful circular rose garden with radiating spokes which the Hurricane of 1947 demolished. That hurricane also destroyed the pier and led the school to construct a magnificent one that lasted until Hurricane Camille in 1969.

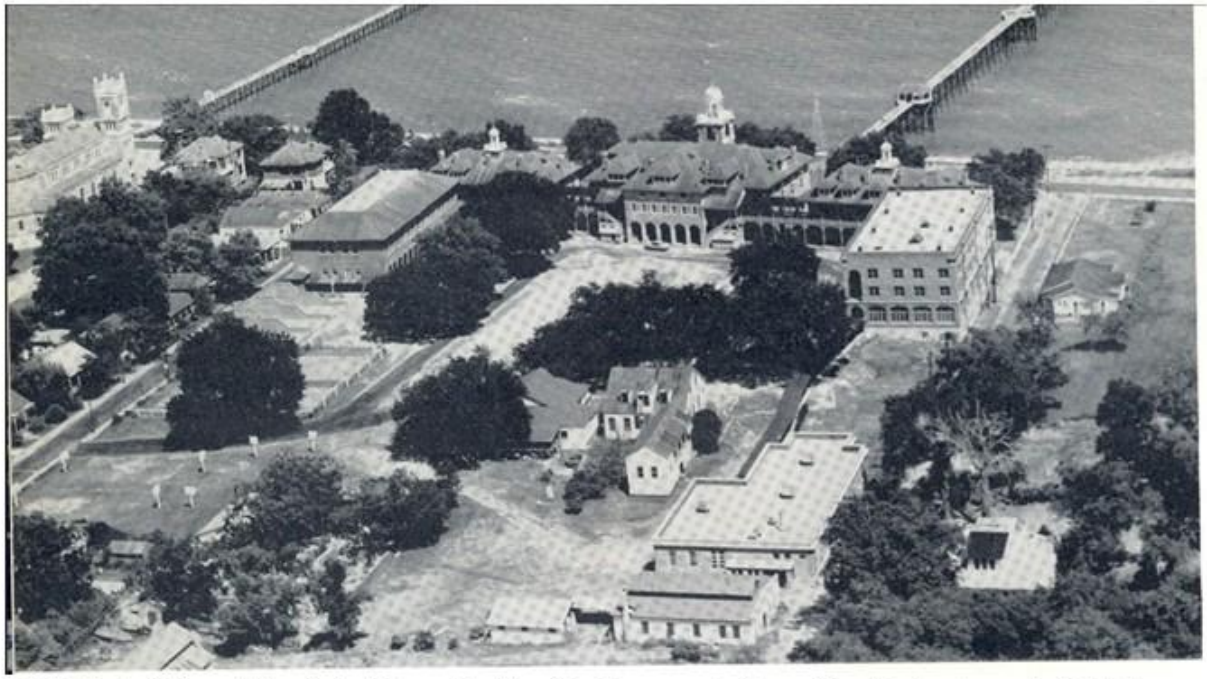
1949 Aerial Photo of St. Stanislaus

Status of buildings as of March, 2025:

1. Our Lady of Gulf
2. Weather Station, destroyed by Camille in 1969, not replaced
3. Pier, 1947; destroyed by Camille in 1969;
   present pier built after Katrina
4. School, 1903; damaged by Camille in 1969;
   present school 1971 and 1991
5. Old gym, 1923; damaged by Katrina, removed 2020;
6. Handball courts; site of present Band Room
7. Chapel, 1929; removed in 2020
8. Tennis courts, moved in 1956; site of Aurelian Hall, 1966
9. Bus garage, demolished 1958
10. Infirmary, 1903; demolished in 1958;
    New Infirmary in 1959, sites13-15;
    Renovated in 1998 as Centennial Hall Brothers' Residence;
    Removed after Katrina damage 2005
11. Brothers. Dining Room, 1859; demolished 1958
12. Music Hall, 2nd floor, 1859, demolished 1958
13. Students' Dining Hall, 1st floor, demolished 1958
14. Dishwashing Room, demolished 1958
15. Kitchen, 1882; demolished 1958
16. Clannon cottage moved here in 1890 for old Brothers' residence;
    Demolished 1958
17. Dining Hall under construction, 1949;
    Damaged by Katrina 2005 and removed
18. Laundry, demolished in 1974 for Band Hall;
    Site of present Fitness Center, 2003
19. Br. Aurelian's house, demolished in 1968 after his death
20. Chicken coops, renovated in 1952 for Band Hall
    Demolished 1974

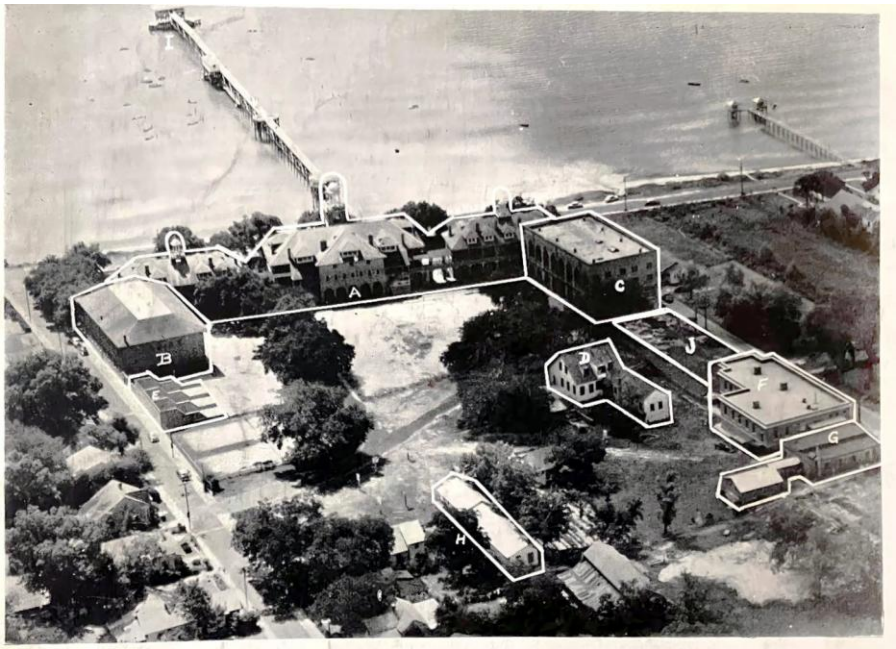
3. The 1949 aerial view shown here with the numbers attached was kindly donated by Johnny Bonck '47. An update on the buildings listed was prepared in March 2025. It is interesting to note that none of the buildings labeled on the SSC campus photo of 1949 exist today.

4. The aerial photo taken in the early 1950s shortly after the completion of the Dining Hall shows the empty space between it and the Chapel Building where in 1959 the Infirmary Building was constructed. It later was named Centennial Hall and became the Brothers' Residence until Hurricane Katrina damaged it severely.



1950s Aerial View…This photo taken shortly after the completion of the Dining Room in 1950 shows the empty space between the Dining Hall and the Chapel where the Infirmary Building would be constructed along Bookter Street.

5. The aerial view below is taken from a SSC brochure printed in 1954.



A—Main building, built in 1903 to replace original College destroyed by fire in that year.

B—Gymnasium building, completed in 1924.

C—Chapel building, dedicated in 1929.

D—Infirmary, oldest unit on campus, acquired in 1896.

E—Guyaut Memorial Handball Courts, 1946.

F—Dining Hall, 1949.

G—Laundry, 1926.

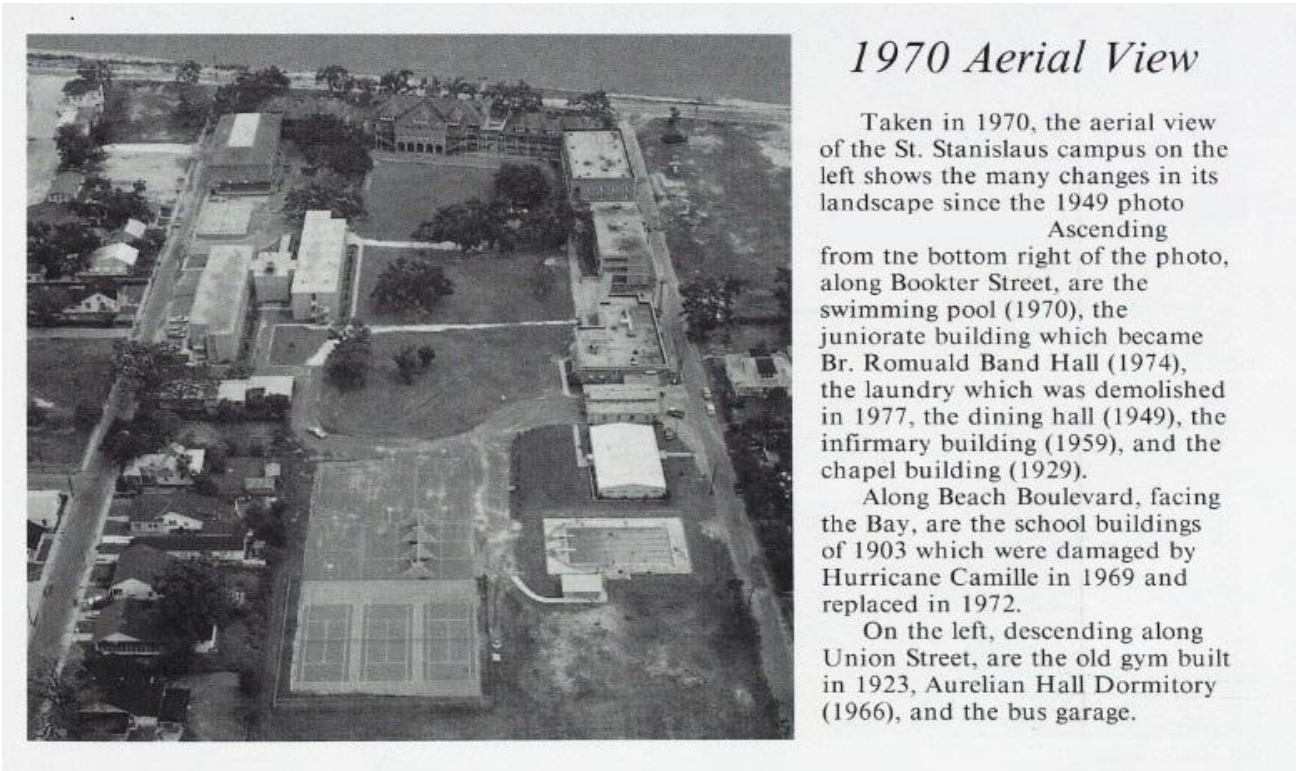
H—Music Hall, 1952.

I—New Pier, built in 1948 to replace the one destroyed by the hurricane of 1947.

J—Site of proposed Centennial Memorial Building.

6. A 1960 aerial view shows the completed Centennial Memorial Building adjacent to the Chapel building. It was commonly referred to as the Infirmary Building or the Dispensary. In 1997 it was renovated to become the Brothers' Residence and renamed Centennial Hall. The 1960 aerial shows a large house on Bookter Street across from the chapel building.

7. The insert next to the 1970 aerial view explains well the changes in the campus over the preceding 10 years. It shows, for example, the Juniorate Building which became the Br. Romuald Band Hall, the swimming pool, Aurelian Hall, and the bus garage.



1970 Aerial View

Taken in 1970, the aerial view of the St. Stanislaus campus on the left shows the many changes in its landscape since the 1949 photo

Ascending from the bottom right of the photo, along Bookter Street, are the swimming pool (1970), the juniorate building which became Br. Romuald Band Hall (1974), the laundry which was demolished in 1977, the dining hall (1949), the infirmary building (1959), and the chapel building (1929).

Along Beach Boulevard, facing the Bay, are the school buildings of 1903 which were damaged by Hurricane Camille in 1969 and replaced in 1972.

On the left, descending along Union Street, are the old gym built in 1923, Aurelian Hall Dormitory (1966), and the bus garage.

This 2002 pre-Katrina aerial view shows the old gym, the chapel building, Centennial Hall (Brothers' Residence), and the dining hall—none of which now exists. It also shows the fitness center (2003) and the roof of the Brother Peter Memorial gym which survived the hurricane.

Not shown in the 2002 aerial view are the Instrumental and Vocal Music Building dedicated in 2007, the College Café opened in 2009, as well as the present pier completed in 2008.

Brother Xavier Werneth, May 2025